10: d'Orleans--258 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 131, 342, 361, 485

"Although the region called Laos has not, properly speaking, any clearly defined frontiers, we may consider that we have crossed the eastern boundary between Dien Bien and Sop Nao. Here the country changes, and we appear to enter a more civilised world; the houses are still based upon piles, but they are better built than those of the Thaïs, and they are arranged in regular lines on each side of a street; at the entrance an empty hostelry is ready for travellers."

10: d'Orleans--264 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 342, 361

"We find some villages in the afternoon, and I get out at one of them--Sop Kin. It contains about twenty huts--small houses built upon piles like those of the Thai's, but more elegant, and half hidden amongst clumps of flowering trees, orange groves, palms, cocoanut palms and bananas. The mulberry tree is also cultivated for the purpose of rearing silkworms."

10: d'Orleans--265 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 361

"...We arrive at Muong Ngoï, a rather important centre. The situation is delightful. The houses are built twenty yards above the river; they are made of woven and white-washed bamboos, which produce the effect of walls. They contain two stories, and are built with very sloping roofs; the staircases with balustrades, balconies, and verandahs, are arranged outside. They might be taken for Swiss chalets, with something lighter, more original, and less conventional about them. But the placard in European letters, 'Royal Siamese Post-office,' throws a discordant note into the scene."

10: d'Orleans--265 [3] T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 231, 342

"... The houses in the village [LSS: at Muong Ngoi] are built upon piles; in front of them, I notice some round cages containing doves, and these being half enveloped in stuff to protect them from the sun, produce from a distance, the effect of Chinese lanterns."

10: d'Orleans--307-308 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 476

"There would be but a poor opening for labour here, [LSS: at Luang Prabang] as what work has to be done is paid for in kind, one family helping another. Thus, for instance, let us suppose that a certain family wants to build a house. Having gradually got together all the necessary materials, it calls its neighbours together, and the [308] whole work is completed in a single day, the housewarming taking place the same evening, and all who have shared in the work joining in it."

10: d'Orleans--369-370 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 342, 361, 563, 712

"We reach Paklay. The river here is broad with sand-banks on either side and water just covering the top of the rocks. The village is situated on the right bank. The piles which support the houses are hid by a net-work of bamboo, arranged also to shut in the animals. A fairly clean hut is set apart for us, as we are to stay here for a day. The Siamese lieutenant has ordered our elephants, but we cannot have them before to-morrow, so I employ a part of the day in taking photographs. The town, if so it may be [370] called, is not large, having 780 inhabitants, including women and children. The Siamese garrison is made up of eighty men, and is shifted every three years. The lieutenant lives in one half of a rather large house, and the other half is occupied by Chinese merchants."

11: League of Nations--54 [4] G-5 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 342, 352

"The houses in Lao are square with a fairly large veranda serving as a hall, reception room and weaving-room. The interior is divided into two parts by partitions of planking or bamboo; one part is the common room, while the other consists of small rooms for the women.

The veranda is reached by a staircase, and a second staircase leads to a small open-air platform at the other end of the house which serves as a kitchen.

There is no furniture. Mats and quilts are spread on the floor."

23: Franck--269 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 342, 352, 361 Ethnic subgroup

"Though I only suspected it then, I was destined to know Nam-lien [EJ: a 'Black Miao' village in Laos.] better than I know my own birthplace, nay, than Paris or Rio de Janeiro. It consisted of a dozen thatched huts with earth floor and wattled walls on either side of the wide space that served as road, one of them the sala or rest-house for French travelers. Two bare-woven bamboo cots and a rough wooden table comprised the furnishings of this, unless one also counted the soft layer of dust on the earth floor as a rug. A few things such as eggs were purchasable about the village--though I should have been in hard luck indeed if I had not taken official advice and brought a few canned supplies with me--and a native was available to boil water and do the simplest form of cooking."

23: Franck--279 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 231, 342, 793

"I spent the morning in a hot walk about the scattered thatched town, [EJ: Xieng Khuang] climbing to jungle-guarded half-ruined old stupas on the rounded hills behind it. Priests of the yellow robe had again appeared, dawdling about their simple monasteries with the leisureliness of men who know that to step on an insect means to be set back that far on the long and difficult road to Nirvana. Speaking of insects, the people of Tran-ninh boast that they are never troubled by mosquitos, because, all their domestic animals being at home under their pole-legged houses, these pests are so busy down there that they never trouble to rise to human height. The custom of living over unconfined stables is further exonerated by the warmth the animals are reputed to give the householders above--for so thin-blooded a race needs its central heating-plant also, during the short tropical 'winters.' "

"The plain facts of the case were that Chao Duong Chan--the 'Chao' meaning prince in the language of this region--[EJ: the native ruler of Luang Prabang] seemed to look upon me, even in the incredibly mud-bespattered state in which I burst forth from the jungle night, as his social superior. At first, evidently, he refused to believe I was I, not because of the bedraggled rags to which the day had reduced what no longer ago than that morning had been a costume fit to be seen at a commissaire's table, but because a telegram had apprised him of my departure, and every one in Laos knew that I could not reach Muongyu that same evening, whatever the evidence of the five senses. But in time the impossible was admitted accomplished, and the rest-house to which I had retired became a place of pilgrimage. We were down in the realm of woven bamboo splints again, and they were used for everything--walls, floors, rafters, granaries, fences, beds--though not for boats, as in Annam. The building to which I had climbed well above the damp and snaky ground was therefore so soft underfoot that there was really no need to open my cot, though nothing in the form of furnishings was to be seen. Gradually a murmur in the night became the sound of muffled voices; torches flashed here and there in the darkness, and at length there crept silently up the very slanting ladder masquerading as a stairway one barefooted smiling Laosian man after another, each bringing me a bouquet of heavy jungle-flowers in a banana-leaf cone, the traditional

greeting to honored visitors to the kingdom, as the flower necklace is in Hawaii. Behind these village [287] authorities, after a fitting lapse of time, came the prince himself, manfully erect, who presented a document from the government of Luang Prabang setting forth his rank and explaining the errand on which he had been sent. He was a slender young man of aristocratic features, this gendre du roi--son-in-law of the king, to translate one of the two languages on the paper he had laid before me--a prince in his own right many generations before he had married one of the royal daughters. He wore a reddish sampot, the adult diaper of Siam, Laos, and Cambodia, and a white jacket of French military cut, starched and spotless, as did also the chief local authority. He spoke excellent French; had in fact, unless my memory fails me, been at school in France, and all in all was a man whom any one might have thanked a king for offering as a companion on such journey as lay before me."

23: Franck--332-333 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 291, 304, 342, 855 Ethnic subgroup

"In most of the [EJ: Kha] huts grandmother and even skinnier grandfather were tending the third generation while the intermediate one was out in the hills in quest of a livelihood. Some of the villages had their basket-like thatched-top huts raised above the ground, like those of the other people of Laos; the commoner custom was to squat on the ground itself in a thatch structure like a flat wigwam. The women, and for that matter the men, were all naked to the waist, a disgusting custom [333] in the case of the old women, whose breasts were as shrunken as if they were about to dry up and drop off. They gave one an unhappy reminder of how brief is the span of human existence. Old men and women alike had holes in their ears large enough to hold a cigar."

23: Franck--341-342 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 342, 361, 515, 779

"The uncrowded, simple, but commodious houses of these Laosian villages are always set well apart and high above the ground, back among palm-trees, banana-plants, and the like. They do not have to crowd together and save all the arable land for rice to feed too numerous mouths, for here a gentle Buddhism takes place of an ancestor-worship so [342] ardent that offspring must be had at any effort and cost. Most families have round or square granaries like huge covered baskets made of wide woven splints and covered by a big thatch roof, all raised off the ground out of reach of rats. The simple houses themselves were of similar materials, a ladder or half a dozen bamboo or pole rungs leading up to the big porch at one end, and close to the floor, a tiny window or two that can be pushed open to one side. Such a village is a thousand per cent more pleasant than a Chinese town, even when there is no public stopping-place except in the same room with slightly supercilious priests who sometimes break sound sleep with their devotions. There is an incredible amount of bathing and great quiet compared to densely packed Chinese existence. Such a village is like a country home in its atmosphere, while those of China resemble tenement-living on the worst of East Sides."

25: Brodrick--101 [2] S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 262, 272, 342, 352

"[HD: The Laotian's] bamboo house on stumpy piles costs nothing to make. He has no furniture, no chairs, no tables. He sleeps on a mat. There may be a few bowls in his hut, but most of the meal is served on palm-leaves. His food is simple--rice, salt fish in brine, raw pork chopped up and smothered in a pungent, aromatic sauce, cakes of rice and bananas (and delicious they are), and he eats iguanas, alligator's eggs and red ants.

When he is not swigging lao, or rice-alcohol, he drinks water and uses tea--Laotian tea is poor stuff--as we did until a few generations ago, as medicine."

25: Brodrick--106 S-3 (1939) 1948 Laotians
116, 342, 592

"[HD: In Luang Prabang province] you go out into the shapeless streets of straw huts and tall trees, of a European-style house here and there, of spires and steep roofs, of a brand-new royal palace, of bamboo huts on piles with three compartments, two for the public and one sacred to the family."

68: Mouhot--90-91 N-5 (1858-61) 1864 Laotians-1-2
116, 162, 164, 342, 361

"At Khao-Khoc, [HD: north of Saraburi in Siam]although the second king often visits it, there is no landing-place, nor even steps cut in the steep banks to aid the ascent.

Immediately after landing I set off to look for a lodging, having been informed that I should find numerous vacant houses belonging to mandarins, amongst which I might make my choice. My men and I hunted amid the brushwood, often sinking up to our knees in mud, but could discover only seven or eight Laotian huts, the inhabitants of which form the nucleus of the population of this future stronghold, now peaceful and hospitable agriculturists, who would be deeply afflicted, and still more terrified, if ever their echoes should repeat the roar of cannon and varied sounds of war. As for the royal habitations, I could not reach them, for the whole ground, excepting a strip about fifty feet broad next the river, is a swamp; and the narrow paths are obstructed by bushes and tall grass, which had had time to grow during the six or eight months that have elapsed since the King has visited the place.

Not being able to find a lodging, some men from the village joined us, and we all set to work to cut down bamboos, with which to construct one, which was soon accomplished; and in this hut, open to every wind, we took up our abode.

I was told that a white elephant had just been taken in Laos, and had been sent off to Bangkok under the care of a mandarin. [91]

All the inhabitants of the village, amounting perhaps to about fifty, have brought their children to me, begging for remedies; some for fevers, others for dysentery or

rheumatism. I have not heard of any cases of leprosy here, as at Khao-Tchioulaü, but the children are repulsively dirty; they are covered with a coating of filth, which makes them resemble little negroes, and the greater number of them are shaking with fever."

Frontier agreements with the neighboring kingdoms. In consequence of agreements reached with the princes of the peninsula, the frontiers of Lan-Xang were permanently fixed from Khone in the south to Pha-Day in the north, and from Siam in the west to Annam in the east. With this last country, to which Souligna had bound himself by taking one of King Le-duy-Ky's daughters as a concubine, it was agreed that all the people who lived in "houses on piles and with verandas" should be called subjects of the king of Vientiane, and that those who inhabited houses "without piles or verandas" should belong to Annam. 631 643* 175* 653 /342/

The stay of the Dutchman Van Wusthof in Vientiane (1641). In 1641 Vientiane was visited by the Dutch traveler Van Wusthof (2). /105/ The account which he has left of his stay in the 175* 114

2. A Jesuit, Father Jean-Marie Leria, had visited Vientiane before Van Wusthof and had returned to Annam by way of Hinboun and Vinh. Cf. G. Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./, and P. Martini, Relation de divers voyages curieux, published at Paris in 1666, "chez Sebastien Marbre-Cramoisy, imprimeur du Roy, rue Saint-Jacques, aux Cicognes."

capital of Lan-Xang contains precious information, even though it remains rather vague because of a lack of previous knowledge and of impartial observation (1). Thus Buddhism in Laos, for example,

1. Histoires singulieres qui se sont passees dans les royaumes du Cambodge et au pays du Laos, aux Indes orientales depuis l'annee 1635 jusqu'en l'annee 1664 avec le voyage des Neerlandais du Cambodge, en remontant la riviere de Laos, a Vinejan, la cour de S. M. le roi de Laos et enfin le cruel massacre qui a eu lieu au Cambodge par les Indiens en l'an 1643, published at Haarlem without any author's name and printed in 1669 by "Pieter Casteleyn, imprimeur demeurant au marche, dans la couronne imperiale." Cf. G. Maspero, op. cot. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./

appeared to him as a crude "paganry," and the number of bonzes scandalized him, as did the morals of the gentle and sensual

633 be seen from a great distance. To be sure, it extends over a prodigi-
174 ous area and is so large that one would take it for a city... The king's
344 apartments, which are embellished with a superb and magnificent portico and a large number of beautiful rooms accompanied by a large parlor, are all made of wood which will not decay and ornamented inside and outside with excellent bas-reliefs so delicately gilded that they seem rather to be covered with flakes of gold than gold leaf.

"From that point one enters the courtyards which are extremely spacious, and one first sees a long line of houses built entirely of brick and roofed /113/ with tile in which the second wives usually stay, and outside another row of houses built alongside in the same symmetry for the mandarins' officers. I could write a whole volume if I undertook a minute description of all the other parts of the palace, the riches, the departments, the gardens and a number of other such things...

565 "The houses of the principal lords and of well-to-do persons are
● 342 very high and beautiful, and are all made of wood with a great deal
352 of artifice and a greater or lesser number of ornaments, depending on the expense to which the individuals are willing to go, but I must confess that the common people and the poor are housed extremely badly
/793/ and that their dwellings are cabins and huts rather than houses. Only the talapoins (bonzes), who are the priests of the idols, have permission to build their monasteries and houses out of brick and stone. Instead of rugs and other such furnishings, persons of quality use small reed mats in which the weave is so delicate and so highly ornamented with figures and various leaf patterns that, to my mind, there is nothing more beautiful nor more pleasing to the eye. They ordinarily use them to cover the walls of /114/ their rooms and houses inside and outside, which they keep very clean and of which they take particular care...

643* "The king is absolute and independent... all the land belongs to
/423/ him, and he disposes as absolute lord of all that his subjects possess...
631 offices, employment, honors and wealth depend absolutely on the
174 king, who raises those persons who please him most to the highest offices in the kingdom.... The principal dignities and offices of the kingdom are eight in number. The first is that of viceroy general... and because the kingdom is divided into seven provinces seven other viceroys are appointed... there are also other governments of less consequence which depend on the former both in respect to civil affairs and to those which concern war.... Each of these provinces has
/701/ its militia, which consists of infantry and cavalry.

342

Fig. 9 /p. 30/ Home of the Superior Commandant at Khong, in 1895.

149: Reinach--22b G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

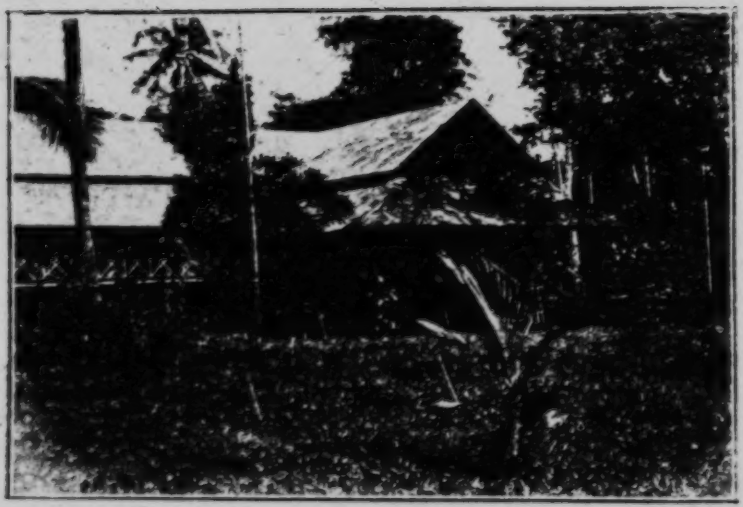

Fig. 10 /p. 31/ Superior Residence at Khong, in 1898

342

Fig. 12 /p. 35/ The approach to South Khone, in 1898.

149: Reinach--36a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

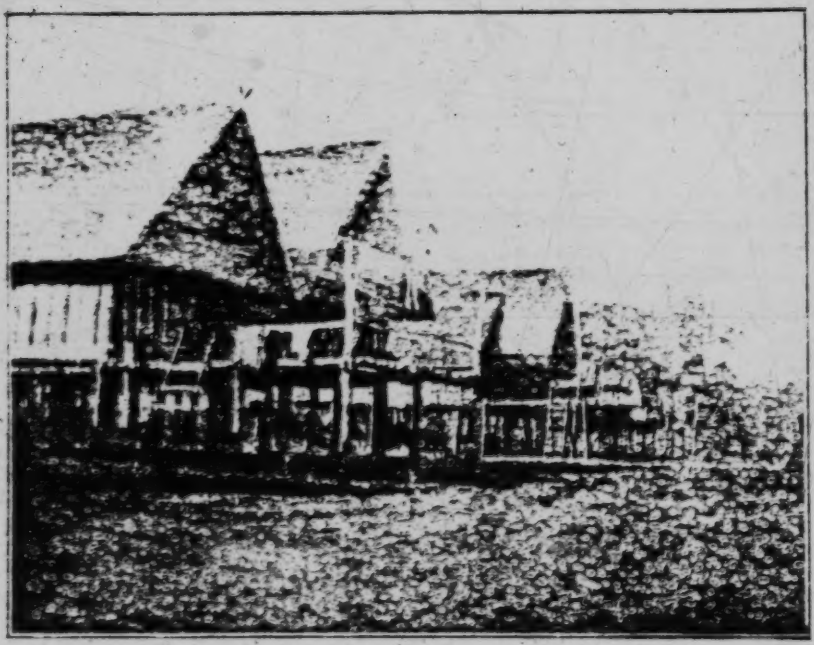

Fig. 15 /p. 50/ A village of Khas. --Plateau of the Bolovens.

149: Reinach--72a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

361

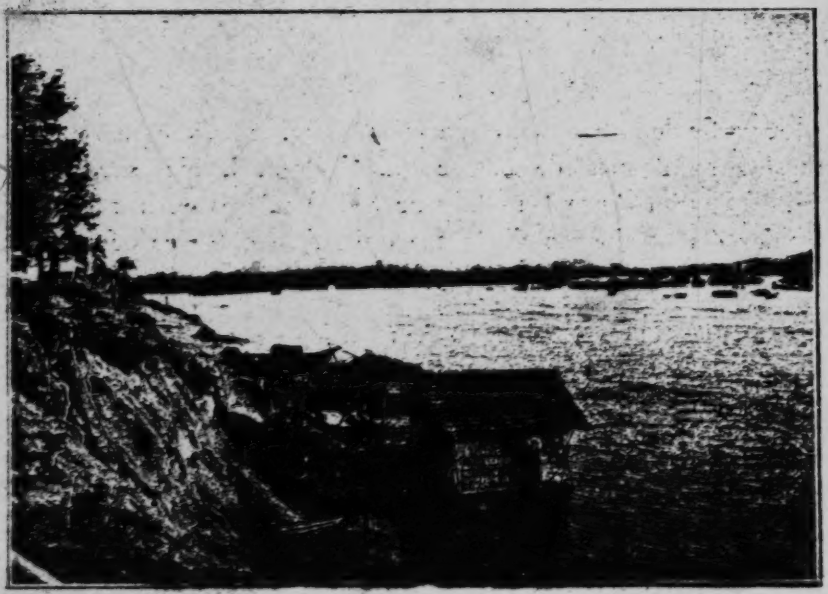

Fig. 26 /p. 96/ Bank of the island of Khong, at low water (1895).

342

Fig. 31 /p. 107/ A European house in Khong.

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4. HYGIENE

The choice of dwelling sites is of prime importance from the point of view of hygiene. Insofar as necessities permit, Europeans in Laos should seek to satisfy the following conditions:

1. Avoid building in regions which are low, hemmed in, formed of damp alluvia or near swamps or stagnant ponds.

2. Also avoid living on the banks of small watercourses and choose instead, insofar as possible, the larger rivers, especially near the point where they join a sea-going river or on the banks of the sea-going river itself (2).

(2) We have seen in Chapter II that the Mekong is the only river in Laos which flows into the sea.

3. Build houses on an eminence, no matter how small, and preferably on a rock foundation or on sand or on alluvia which are sandy and permeable to water.

4. Houses may be of brick or quarry-stone. They may be roofed [116] with tiles, wooden shingles, bamboo lath or ordinary thatch, depending on the local resources. They must be raised above the ground (at least 1.5 meters), and air must be able to circulate underneath.

5. However, a house made of wood or of a double thickness of bamboo lath can be as healthy as a brick house if it is carefully built.

6. Houses should be large, well ventilated and surrounded by [Illustration here] broad verandas provided with awnings made of strips of rattan. There should at least be verandas on the south and west.

7. Floors must be such that they can be washed with running water, while mats and rugs must be kept to a strict minimum and be easy to move. The best procedure is to use a colored plaster or an encaustic and apply it to the floor of the rooms and verandas and to the bottoms of walls and partitions half a meter up from the floor.

8. Furniture must be light and easy to move, clean and even wash. Bent wood, in the Thonet style, and rattan fulfill these two conditions perfectly.

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/117/ 9. Avoid hangings and draperies insofar as possible. Have only folding doors and windows with two interchangeable sets of panels for each (glass for winter and shutters for the hot season).

149: Reinach--86a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

Fig. 33 /p. 116/ A Laotian house.

462 Tilling the ricefields, hunting, fishing and managing rafts and pirogues take up about six months of the year. The rest of the time 241 they rest and enjoy themselves. The status of women in Laos, although not as low and painful as that of other women of Asiatic races, is nevertheless not as pleasant as that of their husbands. In fact, all the petty farming tasks fall on them. They perform all the household labors, care for the poultry yard and the livestock, etc. They do the cooking, decorticate the paddy, go and fetch wood and water, spin, weave and dye cotton and silk, take care of the children, etc. Less [182] fortunate than her husband, the Laotian woman has no leisure except on holidays, and even then she has to make all the preparations without letting her daily occupations suffer.

142 Of ordinary height, generally well made and even elegant of figure, the Laotian woman has a friendly face and is not without 562 either grace or coquetry before her marriage. This does not mean that there are no homely girls, but these are rather an exception. As she grows older and worn from bearing children the Laotian woman loses much of her early grace, but in spite of everything she retains her joyousness, her high spirits and her very pronounced taste for celebrations when there is singing and feasting.

862 Laotian mothers worship their children. They take great care of them and often push their weakness for their children to such a 858 point as to prolong the period of breast-feeding, often beyond the child's fourth year.

• 342 Dwellings. Like all the representatives of the Thai family, the Laotians inhabit houses which are rectangular in shape and are always 574 raised one or two meters above the GROUND on piles. Wood and bamboo, in the form of beams, framing members, rafters, door and window casings, partitions, doors, windows, floors and shingles, are used to build houses, without the use of any nails, all joints and assemblies being fastened together with rattan.

The dimensions of the houses vary greatly and depend on the number of families that they are designed to shelter. Verandas with roofs which are sharply inclined and come down quite low are placed around the house, mainly on the south and west, to temper the heat of the sun and serve as a vestibule, a reception hall or a workshop. The family stays there during the day, as on a sort of neutral ground where people who are coming and going can be received without transgressing custom, which decrees that no one except members of the family and close friends shall have access to the inner apartments, which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

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which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

A sort of stairway without railings or a ladder gives access to the veranda from one of the short sides of the rectangle. Often a second ladder leads to a small uncovered platform [183] situated at the other end of the house. This, so to speak, is the service stairway, or the platform serves as a kitchen or storeroom and for various private uses.

Inside the house is divided into two parts by a longitudinal partition pierced by openings which give access to compartments used as bedrooms. The corridor [Illustration here] left free between the partition and the opposite wall constitutes the common room, and is provided with one or several rectangular hearths. The floor of the verandas, the bedrooms and the common room is covered with mats.

[352]

Furnishings are generally scanty, and consist of mattresses, pillows, cushions, footstools, low stools, blankets, chests, etc.

[343]

The space under the house serves as a stable or barn for horses and livestock, a poultry house and a pigsty. The animals are shut up there each night.

[286]

[184] Looms for weaving may be found either under the verandas or underneath the house.

[343]

The storehouse for paddy is found nearby. It is also mounted on piles and may be built in a rectangular or circular shape. The "hand" or "foot" mortars used to decorticate paddy may either be near the storehouse under an addition, or else under the house.

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[804]

The dimensions of houses are reckoned in Hon or units as long as the span of the arms (1.8 to two meters). Houses may be anywhere from two to eight or nine hons (4 to 20 meters) in length. Their width varies from two to three spans of the arms on the average (four to six meters), not including verandas.

Strictly speaking, the piles are columns which rise from the ground to the tie-beams of the roof trusses. Mortises are cut in them a meter of two above the ground, and the floor joists fitted into the mortises.

Even as they are, these houses resist high winds. They provide good shelter from the sun, rain, etc. and are sufficiently comfortable, even for Europeans. The latter often have to be contented with such houses and can find little fault with them except the instability of the floor and the narrowness of the windows, which makes the inside somewhat dark.

181 bread by their work, they have scarcely a care for the morrow.
461 Scrupulous observers of the traditions handed down to them by their ancestors, they live an utterly carefree life and instinctively dread everything foreign or unknown to them.

463 Occupations. The men busy themselves with the tasks of farming,
241 fishing and hunting. They are very industrious and skilled farmers, and can draw admirably on the soil's resources. They bring in the wate needed for irrigating their rais or mountain ricefields through ingenious
462 canals built along the sides of hills, and they also know how to capture springs, often very distant ones, for the same purpose. To decorticate paddy, they use mills driven by artificial waterfalls. The women perform the household chores, take care of the children, make and mend clothes, harvest and spin cotton, breed silkworms, unwind the cocoons and mill the silk. Theirs also is the task of supplying the home with water and with wood which they gather in the forest, as well as sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, getting in and decorticating the rice. These many tasks leave Thai women and girls little leisure, and it would thus seem only natural that they should profit by a momen of pleasure, whenever one presents itself in the midst of their multiple duties. They do, in fact, go in for fun eagerly and behave as keenly, despite their more reserved appearance, as their Laotian sisters.

361 Houses. There is no difference between Laotian villages and Thai villages, except that the latter are better kept and cleaner.
342 Thai houses are generally longer and higher than those of the
592 Laotians, by reason of the custom which decrees that the whole family-parents, children and grandchildren--shall live under the same roof. Some Thai houses are as much as thirty meters long and from eight to ten meters wide. In rare cases one finds much larger houses which are from seventy to seventy-five meters long and twenty-five meters wide.

342 Thai houses very often have no verandas on their long sides, but always have two, one at each end, which are covered by rounded roofs
554 and serve as reception terraces or antichambers.

The houses of mandarins and notables can be distinguished from the others by the fact that the roof rafters and the trusses of the gables extend above the line of the roof and cross. These members are decorated with wooden silhouettes or scallops ending in discs which, depending on their number and arrangement, indicate the rank of the house's owner.

149: Reinach--179a G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

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Fig. 61 /p. 244/ Mandarins of the province of Muong-Hou.
(Courtesy of M. Besson.)

caught even on the other side of the watershed and then delivered as slaves to the Burmese, Siamese, Cambodian and Laotian merchants of the low country. The barbarity of their mores has been greatly lessened since our arrival in Laos, but traces of it still exist and manifest themselves in rivalries and attacks between tribes. The police force which [260] we have organized in the land in the form of a native militia, the influence of the missionaries who have settled among the turbulent Khas, and also the help and example of the tribes which have submitted to our tutelary authority will soon cause this abnormal state of things to disappear. Finally, our increasingly effective occupation of the land, which has been completed by the organization of the province of Darlac, and the strict protectorate which we exercise over Cambodia, the chief purchaser of slaves, have begun to bring order in an effective fashion to this shameful traffic in human flesh (1).

(1) See § I of Chapter XI.

It should be noted that the Djarais and the Rades are the only Khas who speak Cham, that is to say a greatly corrupted Malay tongue which they have preserved for centuries.

The men's clothing consists of a loin-cloth, and that of the women consists only of a short skirt knotted around the waist or under the armpits, the torso left bare.

Both men and women have long hair wound in a coil. Both sexes, but mainly the men, wear jewels of a crude shape, made of tin or brass, in the form of bracelets, neckbands, ear pendants or cylinders and hairpins. They are also very fond of glass bead necklaces.

These Khas smoke tobacco, either dried or green, as well as bamboo shavings impregnated with nicotine. They make terra cotta pipes with highly worked bowls and also use imported brass pipes. They do not blacken their teeth.

From the point of view of diet and housing, practically the same conditions obtain as we have seen above except that the houses are built with greater care and arranged in the form of a circular camp.

In the middle of Cedang and Rognao villages there is a large house some twenty to thirty meters long by twelve to fifteen meters wide, with a high pointed roof. This is the common house where all the boys of the locality live from the age of nine or ten until the day of their marriage.

Hill Tribes

595 There is polygamy among the Meos, and the Meo women do not enjoy any higher regard than the Kha women.

[101] The Yaos. The Yaos have the same origin as the Meos, and are strikingly like them in many respects. Their mores, their beliefs and their habits are identical.

619 As we have seen above, the Yaos are divided into three varieties, these being the Lantenes, the Khao and the Ao-Tchaine.

291 The Lantenes (blacks) wear broad trousers, a long smock buttoning
302 at the side and a turban, all made of black cottonstuff. They wear their hair long and either wound under a turban or braided in Chinese style.

[342] Their houses are like those of the Meos and shelter several families, each of which has its own quarters. They are generally clean and well kept-up.

593 The mores of the Lantene Yaos are patriarchal, and these folk
562 are monogamous. The women are very reserved and do not let themselves be seen much by strangers. They enjoy a certain respect and are treated with consideration by their husbands.

231 The Lantenes are great livestock breeders, and cultivate the opium
241 poppy in addition to rice and maize. They are skilled hunters of wild
224 animals, and each man owns a rifle from which he is rarely separated.

[212] Besides a dialect peculiar to them, they speak Quoan-hoa (a
[198] Cantonese idiom), and many of them can write Chinese characters.

101 The Khao Yaos are less outgoing than their fellows and do not greet strangers with as much good will.

291 The men's clothing is like that of the Lantenes, [269] but the women are garbed in a different manner and wear their hair in a special way which has earned their tribe the name "Khao" (horns).

Over a pair of black trousers ornamented with colored embroidery and held in place by leggings, Khao Yao women wear a tunic which comes down to the knees but the flaps of which are fastened to the belt. This tunic also has colored embroidery on the chest, back, neck and cuffs, and is held shut with wide silver hooks.

302 Their hairdress consists of a coil which is smeared with wax and lacquer to hold it in place and in which a wooden socket is imbedded. A light bamboo framework is inserted into the socket, and over this is spread a red cloth or a black cloth embroidered in red. The women thus appear to have two horns on their head.

301 Silver jewelry, neckbands, bracelets and ear pendants are worn by the Khao Yaos.

149: Reinach--298a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

342

Fig. 99 /p.406/ A Laotian house.

Meo

516 417 [132] progresses at an even, elongated pace, carrying as much as 30 kilograms in his pack without even seeming to suspect the feats of strength, suppleness and balance which he accomplishes. As long as he remains on high ground his resistance to fatigue is very great indeed, but he cannot go down to the lowlands without danger, especially in the hot season.

101 Certain authors claim that the word "Meo" which, when pronounced with a certain intonation, means cat in several Indo-Chinese languages, was given to these folk by reason of their agility. However, we must note that in [109] Laotian the word "Meo" used to designate these mountainfolk is neither written or pronounced like the word meo which is used to designate cats. There is the same difference between these two words as there is in French between the words maitre and metre.

342 A Meo house is built at ground level on slightly leveled ground. The walls are made of puddled clay or of ill-fitting boards, and the house is roofed with thatch or crudely-squared wooden shingles. The doors are made of wood which has been shaped with an ax, and there [592] are no windows. Often several families live in the same house, and then each has a fireplace to itself and a compartment which serves it as a bedroom. In the common room there is an oven and fireplaces above which objects are placed to dry on a bamboo framework. Behind the house a narrow passageway is left free separating the [343] building from the sheer mountainside. In front there is a narrow veranda where the horses are kept when they are not housed in a stable built on piles and overhanging the mountainside, as are the animal barn and pig sty, the rice granary and the goat pen. This system has the advantage of protecting the animals from the dampness of the ground, since the planks which form the floor jut out over empty space on their solid piles.

[101] Inside the house there are a few furnishings, as among all peoples of Chinese origin. There are benches, tables, camp beds, dishes, 352 iron and copper cooking utensils and opium smoking accessories, all so repulsively filthy that even the least delicate would hesitate to 356 enter and stay in these hovels, where vermin swarm under the protection of the ancestors' altar.

198 Although amongh themselves and with their families the Meos speak a rather unharmonious language, nearly all the men can understand and speak Qouane-hoa, the language of the Chinese mandarins, 212 which is the official language in Yunnan. They can neither read nor write Chinese characters, and have no system of writing of their own.

585 In front of the bride's house, guards make a sham defence of the gate of the house. The husband and his retinue can enter only by making a gift of money or alcohol. When he reaches the stairway of the house, the young man may only climb it after having his feet washed on a piece of stone covered with a banana leaf by the sisters or the women servants of the bride. He must pay for this service, then seat himself in front of the two ritual phakhouan next to his [801] bride, who is already sitting there. The Sou Khouan of the wedding resembles the bassi. However at the wedding there are only two phakhouan and everything in the ceremony must be in even numbers. They are, however, larger and better decorated than the ordinary phakhouan. The marriage is celebrated by two individuals officiating who recite sacramental formulas in duet. Then, after tying a large number of cotton threads around their wrists, the married couple prostrate themselves before each of the aged people and those who are present. They are then led to their room by a lady chosen from among the most virtuous.

Funerals

764 In Laos as in all Buddhist countries, the dead are burned. How-
766 ever, a distinction is made between two kinds of death, normal death and accidental (drowning, suicide or violent death). The dead of the second category must be buried within twenty-four hours. The story is told of a peasant's wife who, having died in childbirth, was quickly cut up in pieces by the villagers who scattered them to the four winds so that she would not become a wandering soul capable of tormenting the living.

764 [58] When there is a death in a house, the body is bathed with tepid water, then with cold water. It is then perfumed and dressed. Two garments are put on it, one wrong side out, the other right side out. The former symbolizes death, the latter life, for the favorite garment of the dead person while alive was chosen. His hair is then combed and he is shackled with a white cotton thread, for he must not return to the world of the living. The same thread is used to wrap around his neck, to tie his two hands together, and his two feet together. This bond must not be cut, so a knot is made at each place where it is attached. This thread also shows man how illusory are the bonds which tie him to the world. Then the body is wrapped in [823 342] a shroud. It is laid parallel with the largest dimension of the house, as opposed to the living who always lie in the direction of its width.

764 coffin is placed on a truck. The bonzes are at the head of the procession, then the widow and the children dressed in white as a sign of mourning.

[60] The coffin is placed on the pyre. All those attending, holding a lighted candle or resinous torch, go to the pyre in single file, and throw the brands into the fire. It is forbidden to light a torch by lending one's light or by borrowing that of a neighbor. During this time the family must throw offerings to the crowd: pieces of banana branches, lemons, etc., into which have been introduced coins mixed with grilled rice. The cotton thread, called fay mongkhou, which [751] had surrounded the house in order to chase away sorrow, illness, the phi, etc., is removed at the end of the ceremony.

[187] [775] On the third day the bones are fetched away. The bonzes are invited, but before touching the ashes, they must be examined to see if they have left any imprints either animal or human, in order to know in what form the dead man will be reborn. The bones are gathered with wooden pincers and then placed in an urn. A statue in a vaguely human form is erected of wet cinders. The urn and the offerings are surrounded by a cotton thread, then the bonzes recite a prayer and this closes the ceremony. The urn will be placed in a pagoda or buried by the family who will erect a that. A little later, to commemorate the death of the departed, the family will dig a hole in the pagoda or near the that, and in it plant a long bamboo at the end of which is fastened a cotton banner laminated with small bamboo sticks. A tray of offerings is brought, which had been placed at the foot of the bamboo pole while it was being set up, and which is held by the relatives and friends of the dead man. Before this, offerings of food had been wrapped in a banana leaf. Once the bamboo is set up, water is poured all around on the earth which is holding it up, in the hope that the merits of this action will reach the other world. Then the whole family [61] squats down around the pole and with joined hands recites prayers.

The Laotian House.

342 It is built on piles and has a veranda. The roof is curved slightly inwards. A long stake holding the water jar is sunk in the ground near the veranda outside the house. The floor is of bamboo or of thin wide boards. The wall and ceiling are of bamboo panels, or of boards, or of mud. There are two principal doors and few windows. A partition going from the inner beam of the front gable separates the house lengthwise in two parts, most often of equal size. One is divided into

342 bedrooms separated from each other by partitions or curtains, the
[178] other is the communal room. In the space between the inner and outer beam, and not limited by the longitudinal partition, is the altar on which there are always one or several buddhas. It is placed on the side of the bedrooms, on the "soung" side of the dwelling, that is on the side opposite the entrance. The dimensions of the dwellings vary between six and twenty-four meters long by four to nine meters wide.

342 The houses are most often open to the east or to the north. They
823 may also overlook what is passing by in the streets or the paths and, as the case may be, the whole length of the river. For there is a superstition which forbids building "across the current," which is considered as unconquerable and invincible, and it would be dangerous to defy it.

343 The outhouses consist of an adjoining kitchen and a granary, a
[252] few meters removed from the principal dwelling. Near this granary is found the picturesque rice pestle (khok khao) which the women work with their feet.

343 [62] All the villagers participate in building the house. When the
476 propitious day and moment have been determined, the owner feeds everybody the whole time the house is being built.

Tattooing

301 Every self-respecting Laotian must be tattooed. The absence of
885 tattooing is a sign of mental and moral, therefore of social, inferiority.
562 As a general rule, however, the Laotian woman is not tattooed. This custom is found only among the women of Youan, Kha or Lu.

301 The Laotian is tattooed chiefly on his thighs, forearms and chest. The tattooing on the thighs is so close together that from a distance a tattooed man looks as if he were wearing close-fitting blue shorts. The Laotians are called "white bellies" as opposed to those who are tattooed down to the navel and are then called black bellies. The colors used for tattooing are indigo blue, red, and black made from a mixture of lampblack diluted with buffalo gall.

[157] Those who have been tattooed are convinced that the signs they wear give them certain supernatural powers, particularly making them invulnerable to bullets and snake bites. During the events of 1941 Siamese soldiers were found wearing white cotton vests covered with cabalistic signs closely related to tattooing. These are a kind of removable tattooing intended to protect those who are wearing them.